

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 NIC-01 IO-14 SAJ-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /147 W

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R 011511Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7443

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, VN, VS

SUBJECT: TASS STATEMENTS ON VIETNAM

1. SOVIETS HAVE USED OFFICIAL BUT UNATTRIBUTED FORMAT OF "TASS STATEMENT" TO ENDORSE PRG MARCH 22 INITIATIVE FOR ACHIEVING NATIONAL CONCORD IN SVN. SEPARATE TASS ITEM, BILLED AS AN "ANNOUNCEMENT" IN TASS ENGLISH, RESPONDS TO HANOI'S MARCH 18 APPEAL TO 1973 PARIS CONVERENCE PARTICIPANTS TO HALT U.S. MILITARY AID DELIVERIES TO GVN IN ALLEGED VIOLATION OF PARIS AGREEMENT.

2. TASS STATEMENT ON PRG "IMPORTANT INITIATIVE" STRESSES FACT THAT NEW PROPOSALS ARE BASED ON PARIS AGREEMENT. IT CALLS ON "SAIGON ADMINISTRATION AND
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EXTERNAL FORCES BACKING IT" TO TAKE REALISTIC AND

POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD PRG PROPOSALS, AND SAYS USSR WILL CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS AGREEMENT AND TO SECURE PEACE IN VIETNAM. U.S. NOT MENTIONED IN STATEMENT.

3. UPBEAT TONE OF ENDORSEMENT FOR PRG PROPOSALS CONTRASTS SOMEWHAT WITH TASS EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR DRV BLAST AGAINST U.S. MILITARY AID, BUT SHARPEST LANGUAGE IS DRAWN FROM HANOI MARCH 18 NOTE AND DOES NOT FORMALLY REPRESENT SOVIET POSITION. TASS STRESSES POLITICAL ROOTS OF TENSION IN SVN, WHICH IT SAYS DERIVES FROM SAIGON'S UNWILLINGNESS TO RECKON WITH EXISTENCE OF TWO ZONES OF CONTROL, TWO ADMINISTRATIONS AND TWO ARMIES. ALTHOUGH TASS REPEATS STANDARD PHRASE THAT SAIGON RELIES ON SUPPORT OF "IMPERIALIST CIRCLES OF USSR," IT DELIVERS PUNCH LINE IN GENERALIZED AND NON-ACCUSATORY FORM: USSR CONDEMNS DECISIVELY ANY ACTIONS WHICH BREAK OR UNDERMINE PEACE IN VIETNAM, IN WHATEVER FORM THEY MAY APPEAR.

4. COMMENT: THROUGH THESE TWO TASS STATEMENTS, MOSCOW HAS DISCHARGED ITS MINIMUM OBLIGATION OF GIVING POLITICAL SUPPORT TO CURRENT HANOI OBJECTIVES. ALTHOUGH SOVIETS APPEAR TO ATTACH SOME IMPORTANCE TO ISSUE OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO GVN, THEY ARE CLEARLY UNWILLING AT THIS STAGE TO GIVE VIETNAM A VERY HIGH PRIORITY IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, ARMISTICE, PEACE, NEWSPAPERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MOSCOW04711
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740072-0292
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740477/aaaactdx.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 APR 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <31 JUL 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TASS STATEMENTS ON VIETNAM
TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, VN, VS, TASS, PRG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005